

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4296
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION NATO
USNMR SHAPE
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 7696

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CENTO IR
SUBJ: IRANIAN AND PAKISTANI ATTITUDES TOWARD CENTO

REF A. ANKARA 6336, B. TEHRAN 6224 (NOTAL)

1. AS NOTED IN TEHRAN REFTTEL, IRANIANS DESISTED FROM PUTTING UP CANDIDATE FOR THE NEXT CENTO SYG BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE TURKEY'S TURN IS NOT YET COMPLETED. IN OTHER WORDS THEY PREFER TO WAIT AND HAVE THEIR CANDIDATE SERVE A FULL TERM RATHER THAN SIMPLY COMPLETING BAYULKEN'S TERM OF OFFICE. THIS DOES NOT IN ANY WAY SIGNIFY LESS INTEREST IN CENTO.

2. IN FACT, SHAH IS ON RECORD DESCRIBING CENTO AS "A CLUB" FOR WHICH APPEARANCES COUNT AT LEAST AS MUCH AS UNDERLYING SUBSTANCE. IRANIANS GENERALLY AGREE WITH ESTIMATE THAT PAKISTAN'S FUTURE PARTICIPATION IN CENTO CONTINUES IN
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DOUBT (AS INDEED IT HAS FOR SOME YEARS). LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN PAKISTAN SUGGEST BOTH SIDES IN UPCOMING ELECTION CARRY SUBSTANTIAL ANTI-CENTO VIEWS, THOUGH BHUTTO'S ATTITUDE IS, OF COURSE, MORE COMPLICATED THAN PNA'S OUTRIGHT ANNOUNCEMENT THAT PAKISTAN WILL WITHDRAW IF PNA WINS.

3. AS TO SPECIFIC STEPS TAKEN BY PRESENT PAKISTAN MILITARY GOVERNMENT (ANKARA REFTTEL), MFA DEPARTMENT HEAD HERE RAISES THE SPECULATION THAT PAKISTANI RETICENCE MIGHT RPT MIGHT BE LIMITED ONLY TO MILITARY PARTICIPATION IN CENTO ACTIVITIES. WHETHER OR NOT THIS COULD LEAD TO SOME SORT OF MODIFIED PARTICIPATION BY PAKISTAN IN THE MANNER, SAY, OF GREECE IN NATO REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

4. WHILE IRANIANS HAVE NOT MADE ANY RECENT REPRESENTATIONS TO PAKISTAN RE CENTO, THEY THINK PAKISTANIS ARE WELL AWARE THAT THEIR CONTINUING COOPERATION WITH IRAN AND TURKEY IN THE RCD ORGANIZATION IS CLOSELY RELATED TO EXISTENCE OF THE CENTO ALLIANCE. SHOULD PAKISTAN MOVE TO SEVER ITS TIES WITH CENTO, IRANIANS TELL US FUTURE OF ORGANIZATION WILL TO A LARGE EXTENT DEPEND ON ATTITUDE USG ASSUMES TOWARD ITS CONTINUED EXISTENCE. SULLIVAN

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